FRAGMENTS OF LETTERS OF XENOPHON,

FROM STOBÆUS.

FROM A LETTER TO ÆSCHINES.[1]

1. HERMOGENES, happening to meet me, told me some other things, and, as I asked him about you, what system of philosophy you followed, he replied, the same as Socrates. 2. But even when you were living at Athens, I admired your judgment; and as I began to admire you then, so also now I admire the unshaken firmness of your mind above any of those that have embraced the pursuit of wisdom; for it is, as I consider, the greatest proof of virtue, that you have been attracted by that man, if indeed people thought[2] the life of Socrates that of a mortal man.

3. That there are divine beings over us is manifest to every one; and it is enough for us to worship them for the superiority of their power; but of what nature they are, it is neither easy to find, nor dutiful to inquire; for it does not belong to slaves to understand the nature and conduct of their masters, as their sole business is to serve; 4. and, what is the most remarkable, the more admiration we must bestow on those who labour for the interests of mankind, the more blame is attached[3] to those who aim at getting reputation

[1] Stobæus, Tit. 80. 12. It is also to be found in Eusebius, Præp. Evan. xiv. 12.

[2] Ἡγοῦντο.] This word is probably corrupt. Leunclavius conjectured ἡγεῖται τις, which, says Weiske, is, if not the happiest of conjectures, better certainly than ἡγοῦντο.

[3] The text is here apparently corrupt or defective. Leunclavius reads τόσον τόδε for τοσῷδε, which furnishes a nominative case for φέρει, and makes the sense "the more blame this attaches," &c., ἄχθος, as Weiske observes, having apparently the force of ψόγος. This section is supplied from Eusebius, being omitted by Stobæus.

from improper and worthless objects. 5. For when, my dear Æschines, did any one ever hear Socrates discoursing about the heavenly bodies,[1] or exhorting men to learn geometry in order to improve their morals? As for music, we are aware that he knew nothing more of it than the pleasure of hearing it. But he was constantly discussing with his friends what propriety was, or fortitude, or justice, or other virtues.[2] 6. These he called the important concerns of mankind; other things he said were impossible to be comprehended by man, or were akin to fables, trifling amusements for the mind, such as those on which the sophists so superciliously descant. Nor did he only say this, without observing it in his conduct; but to detail what he did to you who know it, though it would not be unpleasing, would take up time; and I have recorded it elsewhere.[3]

7. Let those, therefore, whom Socrates did not satisfy, be convinced and keep silence, or adopt just notions respecting him; a man to whose wisdom the god at Delphi testified, while those who put him to death could find no expiation by repentance.[4] 8. But these illustrious philosophers[5] are in love with Egypt and the prodigious knowledge of Pythagoras,[6] their extravagant pursuit of which convicts them of inconstancy to Socrates, as does also their love of tyranny, and their preference of the immoderate luxury of a Sicilian table to a frugal diet.[7]

[1] Comp. Mem. Soc. iv. 7. 6.

[2] Mem. Soc. i. 1. 16.

[3] In the Memorabilia of Socrates.

[4] Though the Athenians afterwards repented of having condemned Socrates, and banished those who were the cause of his death, while they paid Socrates himself almost divine honours, yet they could never think that they had made sufficient atonement for their fault. *Zeune.*

[5] Here again the text is unsound. For Τὸ δὲ καλὸν ἄρα, with which the sentence begins, Gesner in his edition of Stobæus reads οἱ δὲ καλοὶ ἄνδρες.

[6] This, according to Zeune, is directed against Plato, who, like Pythagoras, travelled in Egypt, and in whose philosophy, he says, there are traces of that of Pythagoras.

[7] This also refers to Plato, says Zeune who was a friend of the Dionysii, the tyrants of Sicily. Comp. Cic. Tusc. Disp. v. 35.

FROM A LETTER TO CRITO.

. . . . For be assured that Socrates often said to us, that those who are anxious about their children that they may have abundance of wealth, but have no care that they may become honourable and upright, act like those who breed horses, but train them to no military uses, though they supply them with abundance of food ; 2. since they will thus have their horses fatter, but unqualified for what they ought to be able to do, as the merit of a horse consists, not in having abundance of flesh, but in being courageous and well-exercised for the field of battle. The same fault, he said, was committed by those who acquire a great quantity of land for their children, but are regardless of their personal improvement ; since what they possess will be thought of great value, but themselves of very little ; while, on the contrary, that which possesses ought to be more valuable than that which is possessed. 3. Accordingly, he who renders his son deserving of high estimation has, though he bequeaths him but little, bestowed upon him much ; for it is from the condition of the mind [2] that our possessions appear greater or less, since to a well-ordered mind they seem sufficient, but to an ill-regulated and untaught mind too little. 4. You give your children nothing more than necessity requires : this, however, by the well-instructed, is considered not only sufficient for their wants, but absolute wealth ; but as for the ignorant, though it frees them from bodily uneasiness,[3] it does not at all diminish their despondent views of the future.

FROM A LETTER TO SOTEIRA.[4]

To me, Soteira, death appears nothing either repulsive or attractive, but merely an end of life, though not indeed the same for all, as inequality from birth, in regard to strength or weakness, brings inequality in number of years ; [5] and as different causes, sometimes disgraceful, and sometimes honourable and becoming, bring on death.

[1] Stob. Tit. 83. 29. [2] Comp. Banquet, c. 4, sect. 34.
[3] As hunger, thirst, cold. *Zeune.* [4] Stob. Tit. 121. 37.
[5] This passage is corrupt. I follow Weiske's reading and interpretation.

FROM THE SAME LETTER.[1]

But neither ought you to feel so much concern about death, knowing that we must regard birth as the beginning of man's course, and death as the end. He[2] has died, as he who was even ever so reluctant would have died; but to die honourably is the part of one who is willing to die, and who has been taught what he ought to know. Happy therefore is Gryllus, and whoever chooses, not the greatest prolongation of life, but life distinguished by virtue; though the gods granted him, indeed, but a short life.

FROM A LETTER TO LAMPROCLES, OR LAMPROCLEIA.[3]

... For you must first of all approve the excellent precept of Socrates, that "we must measure wealth;"[4] for Socrates used to say, that vast property was not wealth, but so much as is becoming for us to use; and he admonished us besides not to err in our judgment about such matters, as those who use what they possess becomingly are justly to be called rich; but others he pronounced poor, and declared that they were afflicted with poverty of an incurable kind, as it was want of understanding, and not of pecuniary means. * * * No evil indeed originates with a man who makes prudence and temperance the foundations of wisdom.

There are five Letters attributed to Xenophon in the Socratis et Socraticorum Epistolæ, *published by Leo Allatius, and placed by Weiske at the end of his edition of Xenophon; but as they, with the rest of the letters in Leo's volume, are now universally regarded as forgeries, it is not thought necessary to translate them.*

J. S. W.

[1] Stob. Tit. 124. 42.

[2] That is, Gryllus, the son of Xenophon, who is named just below, and who fell with honour in the battle of Mantineia.

[3] Stob. Tit. 5. 79, 80.

[4] Comp. Hiero, c. 4, sect. 8.

THE

EPISTLES OF XENOPHON

TRANSLATED BY

THOMAS STANLEY, Esq.

[729]

EPISTLES OF XENOPHON.

EPISTLE I.

TO ÆSCHINES.

Meeting with Hermogenes, amongst other things I asked him what philosophy you followed, he answered, the same as Socrates. For this inclination I admired you, when you lived at Athens, and now continue the same admiration for your constancy above other students of wisdom; the greatest argument to me of your virtue, is your being taken with that man, if we may call the life of Socrates mortal. That there are divine beings over us, all know: we worship them as exceeding us in power; what they are is neither easy to find, nor lawful to inquire. It concerns not servants to examine the nature and actions of their masters, their duty is only to obey them, and which is most considerable, the more admiration they deserve who busy themselves in those things which belong to man; the more trouble this brings them, who affect glory in vain unseasonable objects. For when, Æschines, did any man hear Socrates discourse of the heavens, or advise his scholars to mathematical demonstrations? we know he understood music no farther than the ear; but was always discoursing to his friends of something excellent; what is fortitude and justice and other virtues. These he called the proper good of mankind; other things he said men could not arrive at; or they were of kin to fables, such ridiculous things as are taught by the supercilious professors of wisdom. Nor did he only teach this, his practice was answerable; of which I have written at large elsewhere, what I hope will not be unpleasing to you, though you know it already, to peruse. Let those who are not satisfied with what Socrates delivered, give over upon this conviction, or confine themselves to what is probable. Living, he was attested wise by the deity; dead, his murderers could find no expiation by repentance. But these extraordinary persons affect Egypt, and the prodigious learning of Pythagoras, which unnecessary study argueth them of inconstancy towards Socrates, as doth also their love of tyrants, and preferring the luxury of a Sicilian table before a frugal life.

EPISTLE II.

TO CRITO.

Socrates often told us, that they who provide much wealth for their children, but neglected to improve them by virtue, do like those that feed their horses high, and never train them to the manage; by this means their horses are the better in case, but the worse for service, whereas the commendations of a horse consists not in his being fat, but serviceable in war. In the same kind err they who purchase lands for their children, but neglect their persons; their possessions will be of great value, themselves of none, whereas the owner ought to be more honourable than his estate. Whosoever therefore breeds his son well, though he leave him little, gives him much: it is the mind which makes him great or small: whatsoever they have, to the good seems sufficient, to the rude too little. You leave your children no more than necessity requires, which they, being well educated, will esteem plentiful. The ignorant, though free from present trouble, have nothing the less fear for the future.

EPISTLE III.

TO SOTIRA.

Death in my opinion is neither good nor ill, but the end of the life, not alike to all, for as stronger or weaker from their birth, their years are unequal; sometimes death is hastened by good or evil causes: and again, neither is it fitting to grieve so much for death, knowing that birth is the beginning of man's pilgrimage, death the end. He died as all men, though never so unwilling, must do: but to die well, is the part of a willing and well educated person. Happy was Gryllus, and whosoever else chooseth not the longest life, but the most virtuous: though his, it pleased God, was short.

EPISTLE IV.

TO LAMPROCLES.

You must first approve the excellent assertion of Socrates, that riches are to be measured by their use. He called not large possessions riches, but so much only as is necessary, in the judgment whereof he advised us not to be deceived, these he called truly rich, the rest poor, labouring under an incurable poverty of mind, not estate.

EPISTLE V.

They who write in praise of my son Gryllus, did as they ought, and you likewise do well in writing to us the actions of Socrates; we ought not only to endeavour to be good ourselves, but to praise him who lived chastely, piously, and justly, and to blame fortune, and those who plotted against him, who ere long will receive the punishment thereof. The Lacedæmonians are much incensed at it, for the ill news is come hither already, and reproach our people, saying, they are mad again, in that they could be wrought upon to put him to death, whom Pythia declared the wisest of men. If any of Socrates's friends want those things which I sent, give me notice, and I will help them, for it is just and honest; you do well in keeping Æschines with you, as you send me word. I have a design to collect the sayings and actions of Socrates, which will be his best apology, both now and for the future, not in the court where the Athenians are judges, but to all who consider the virtue of the man. If we should not write this freely, it were a sin against friendship, and the truth. Even now there fell into my hands a piece of Plato's to that effect, wherein is the name of Socrates, and some discourses of his not unpleasant. But we must profess that we heard not, nor can commit to writing any in that kind, for we are not poets as he is, though he renounce poetry; for amidst his entertainments with beautiful persons, he affirmed that there was not any poem of his extant, but one of Socrates, young and handsome. Farewell, both, dearest to me.

EPISTLE VI.

Intending to celebrate the feast of Diana, to whom we have erected a temple, we sent to invite you hither; if all of you would come, it were much the best, otherwise, if you send such as you can conveniently spare to assist at our sacrifice, you will do us a favour. Aristippus was here, and before him, Phædo, who were much pleased with the situation and structure, but above all, with the plantation which I have made with my own hands. The place is stored with beasts convenient for hunting, which the goddess affects; let us rejoice and give thanks to her who preserved me from the king of the Barbarians, and afterwards in Pontus and Thrace from greater evils, even when we thought we were out of the enemies' reach. Though you come not, yet am I obliged to write to you. I have composed some memorials of Socrates, when they are perfect you shall have them. Aristippus and Phædo did not disapprove of them; salute in my name Simon the leather dresser, and commend him that he continueth Socratic discourses, not diverted by want, or his trade, from philosophy, as some others who decline to know and admire such discourses and their effects.

EPISTLE VII.

Come to us, dear friend, for we have now finished the temple of Diana, a magnificent structure, the place set with trees, and consecrated, what remains will be sufficient to main-

tain us; for, as Socrates said, if they are not fit for us, we will fit ourselves to them; I write to Gryllus my son and your friend, to supply your occasions; I write to Gryllus, because, of a little one you have professed a kindness for him.

EPISTLE VIII.

TO XANTIPPE.

To Euphron of Megara, I delivered six measures of meal, eight drachms, and a new raiment for your use this winter; accept them, and know, that Euclid and Terpsion are exceeding good, honest persons, very affectionate to you and Socrates; if your sons have a desire to come to me, hinder them not, for the journey to Megara is neither long nor incommodious; pray forbear to weep any more, it may do hurt, but cannot help. Remember what Socrates said, follow his practice and precepts; in grieving you will but wrong yourself and children; they are the young ones of Socrates, whom we are obliged not only to maintain, but to preserve ourselves for their sakes; lest, if you or I, or any other, who, after the death of Socrates, ought to look to his children, should fail, they might want a guardian to maintain and protect them. I study to live for them, which you will not do unless you cherish yourself. Grief is one of those things which are opposite to life, for by it the living are prejudiced. Apollodorus surnamed the Soft, and Dion, praise you, that you will accept nothing from any, professing you are rich; it is well done, for as long as I and other friends are able to maintain you, you shall need none else. Be of good courage, Xantippe, lose nothing of Socrates, knowing how great that man was, think upon his life, not upon his death; yet, that to those who consider, it will appear noble and excellent. Farewell.

EPISTLE IX.

TO CEBES AND SIMMIAS.

It is commonly said, nothing is richer than a poor man. This I find true in myself, who have not so much, but whilst you my friends take care of me, seem to possess much; and it is well done of you to supply me as often as I write: as concerning my commentaries, there is none of them but I fear should be seen by any in my absence, as I professed in your hearing, at the house where Euclid lay. I know, dear friends, a writing once communicated to many is irrecoverable. Plato, though absent, is much admired throughout Italy and Sicily for his treatises; but we cannot be persuaded they deserve any study; I am not only careful of losing the honour due to learning, but tender also of Socrates, lest his virtue should incur any prejudice by my ill relation of it. I conceive it the same thing to calumniate, or not praise to the full those of whom we write; this is my fear, Cebes and Simmias, at present, until my judgment shall be otherwise informed. Fare ye well.